

April 29, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon (LA-03) announced today that Lafourche Parish School Board and Louisiana's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness will receive \$13,385,812 in federal disaster grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The grants will reimburse the state and the school board for costs incurred in responding to Hurricanes Ike, Gustav, Katrina and Rita.

"Major hurricanes have become all too frequent facts of life in south Louisiana, causing a huge financial burden for our state and local governments as they work to help prepare and rebuild our communities," Rep. Melancon said. **"Federal grants like these will help them recover some of the costs from the storms, but the damage to their budgets is still significant. I will continue pushing the federal government to waive the local cost share for Gustav and Ike expenses, so Louisiana can dedicate our resources to other needs."**

Following Hurricanes Gustav and Ike last September, Rep. Melancon sent [a letter](#) to the President asking him to waive Louisiana's local cost share for disaster assistance and recovery projects resulting from the two storms. While President Bush waived the cost share for Texas, Louisiana's match has not yet been waived. Click

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Rep. Melancon's letter.

Paul Rainwater, executive director of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, said, "As we continue our recovery from four storms in three years, these project approvals provide us with the funding we need to keep the process going. However, we continue to fight for the federal government to pay 100 percent of the costs of Gustav and Ike recovery because of Louisiana's continued need in the face of unprecedented damages since 2005."

The following federal grants were announced today:

- **\$3,199,401.56 for supplying emergency meals following Hurricane Ike.** In preparation for Hurricane Ike in September 2008, Louisiana's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (OHSEP) contracted several companies to supply and transport "Meals Ready to Eat" (MREs) to emergency staging locations throughout the state. The MREs were distributed to the Regional Staging Area (RSA) in Port Barre and further to Camp Minden and then to 65 various Points of Distribution (POD) within the state. This federal grant will reimburse the state specifically for the cost of supplying the meals to the regional staging areas prior to the onslaught of Hurricane Ike. The grant only reimburses the state for 75% of the costs, as federal law requires a 25% local cost share unless otherwise determined by the President or Congress. Rep. Melancon, in partnership with Louisiana officials, are advocating

for a 100% federal cost share for Hurricane Ike and Gustav disaster assistance and recovery projects. Project worksheet number 1792 PA-06-LA-1792-PW-00374(0).

- **\$1,330,823.74 to Lafourche School Board for emergency protective measures after Hurricane Gustav.** This grant will reimburse the Lafourche Parish School Board for the cost of taking emergency protective measures for their damaged buildings and grounds after Hurricane Gustav. Specifically, the school board removed debris for emergency vehicle passage, supplied temporary power and water until services were restored, protected buildings from further damage, and moved contents to dry areas. The grant only reimburses the school board for 90% of the costs. Rep. Melancon and state and local officials are advocating for a 100% federal cost share for Hurricane Ike and Gustav disaster assistance and recovery projects. Project worksheet number 1786 PA-06-LA-1786-PW-01098(0).

- **\$2,247,330.23 for Louisiana's 2005-2007 post-Katrina expenses in managing federal recovery grant program.** Following Hurricanes Katrina in 2005, Louisiana's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (OHSEP) assisted in managing FEMA's Public Assistance program. The Public Assistance program helps state and local governments quickly respond and recover from major disasters by providing disaster grant assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the repair, replacement, or restoration of disaster-damaged, publicly owned facilities. The PA Program also encourages protection of these damaged facilities from future events by providing assistance for hazard mitigation measures during the recovery process. This federal grant will reimburse the state for the cost of labor and purchasing equipment and material incurred while managing the PA program in Louisiana at the state level. The version announced today increases the grant amount to cover costs incurred by the state for an additional six month period, through June 2007. Project worksheet number 1603-16202v2.

- **\$5,555,910.10 for Louisiana's 2007-2008 post-Katrina expenses in managing federal recovery grant program.** Similar to the grant above, this grant will reimburse the state for the cost of labor, equipment and materials incurred while managing FEMA's Public Assistance program following Hurricane Katrina. This federal grant originally covered the period from July 2007 to December 2008, but the version announced today increases the reimbursement amount to cover an additional six months of costs, through June 2008. Project worksheet number 1603-16861v1.

- **\$1,052,346.50 for Louisiana's 2007-2008 post-Rita expenses in managing federal recovery grant program.** Similar to the grant above, this grant will reimburse the state for the cost of labor, equipment and materials incurred while managing FEMA's Public Assistance program following Hurricane Rita. This federal grant originally covered the period from July 2007 to December 2008, but the version announced today increases the

reimbursement amount to cover an additional six months of costs, through June 2008. Project worksheet number 1607-4556v1.

Rep. Melancon continues to work in Congress to further reduce the financial burden on local governments in south Louisiana following major hurricanes. After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, he partnered with the Louisiana delegation and Congressional leadership to waive the local match requirement for disaster recovery projects and allow federal Community Disaster Loans to be forgiven for localities that could not afford to repay them.

Rep. Melancon worked with House leadership to include the waiver of the 10% local match in the 2007 Iraq/Katrina Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill, which was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President at the end of May 2007. The local match requirement had been waived 32 times since 1985 when per capita rebuilding costs have been deemed excessive, but had not yet been waived for Katrina and Rita. Before the match was waved, many of the estimated 23,000 disaster recovery projects in Louisiana had been put on hold because local governments did not have the resources to provide the match.

In addition, Rep. Melancon successfully lobbied House leadership to include language in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill making Katrina- and Rita-affected communities eligible for forgiveness of their Community Disaster Loans. An estimated \$1 billion in CDL's were provided by the federal government to hurricane-affected local governments immediately following Katrina and Rita to help them continue daily operations, such as payroll for law enforcement and emergency responders. Many local governments do not have the ability to repay this massive debt, as their tax bases were devastated by the storms. Rep. Melancon argued that, in the past, CDL's have been forgiven following many other major disasters, including Hurricane Andrew and the September 11th terrorist attacks. With the passage of the 2007 Supplemental, Katrina and Rita CDL's became eligible for forgiveness, taking a huge financial burden off of local governments in south Louisiana.

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